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**United States Department of the Interior**

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Instruction Memorandum No. NM-2003-xxx  
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To: Field Managers

From: State Director

Subject: Oil and Gas Activity Coordination with Grazing Permittee/Lessees. DD 04/??/03

**Program Areas**

Oil and Gas and Range Management programs.

**Purpose**

The BLM New Mexico has committed to improve our communication with grazing permittees/lessees regarding oil and gas development on public lands. This Memorandum establishes procedures for Field Offices to follow to ensure alignment among offices regarding notification and participation of livestock grazing permittees/lessees about oil and gas activities on public lands. This effort is part of our overall commitment to employ the Secretary's four C's with the various public land users, while seeking a balance in multiple resource use, development and conservation.

**Background**

In the past, Field Offices routinely provided surface owners overlying federal leases the opportunity to participate in the pre-drill visit to an oil and gas well location. We have not, however, offered the same opportunity to the grazing lessee/permittee.

Improved coordination and integration of the grazing permittee/lessee operations with oil and gas activity would follow the public land management prescriptions outlined by the Secretary's four C's. The Secretary of the Interior has established communication, consultation, and cooperation to accomplish conservation (four C's) as a central core of the Department's mission.

Our mission in the BLM is to sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands (productive harmony) for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. As we manage the public lands, we should look for opportunities to build new partnerships between our agency and public land users.

The workload faced by Field Offices has grown in complexity as greater demands are placed on the public lands. We have to be particularly sensitive to the impacts of our decisions on local communities and the people who make a living on the land as we develop policy. We would like to enhance the relationships already built with the local public land users especially as we balance the development of widespread oil and gas resources in regard to the existing grazing permittee/lessee operations.

### **Policy / Actions**

We are establishing the following as beginning steps in meeting the Department's objectives. Oil and gas Applications for Permits to Drill (APD's), Plans of Development, unitization, and field development proposals signal the oil and gas lessee's intention to develop their resource. During the BLM review of these applications and proposals, the BLM conducts its analysis to determine whether the proposed location is sound both from a technical and environmental standpoint. It is important that the BLM utilize the most recent data regarding impacts to public land resources, including consultation with existing grazing operations that depend on the public lands.

1. During the APD permitting process, prior to the onsite predrill meeting, it is the responsibility of the Field Office Manager to ensure timely notification by telephone (if possible) to the affected grazing permittee/lessee's. If it is not possible to reach the permittee/lessee by telephone, a notice should be mailed by the most rapid means possible. The intent is to inform the permittee/lessee of the proposed well location, extent of surface disturbance, and the duration of the drilling operation, in a sufficient manner to receive meaningful input. The permittee should be consulted on how to improve cooperation between competing surface uses in oil and gas areas.
2. The same principle is true for all oil and gas field development including unit Plans of Development, the grazing permittee/lessee will be provided opportunities for consultation regarding the coordination of surface disturbing activities and how to achieve cooperation between the two users of public land resources.
3. Final reclamation approval and inspection of oil and gas drill pads and facility sites will not be made without at least consulting the specific grazing permittee/lessee. This effort is a way to close the coordination loop for the public land user inheriting the surface disturbing reclamation activities of the oil and gas company.

**Budget Implications**

Not significant, mostly an extension of the normal routine, with a heightened awareness, of providing customer service to our grazing permittee/lessee stakeholders.

**Coordination**

If you have any questions regarding implementation of this Memorandum, contact Carsten Goff, DSD for Resource, Planning, Use and Protection at (505) 438-7512, or from the Resource staff, Bob Alexander at 438-7428, and Steve Wells at 438-7438.

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**Distribution**

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